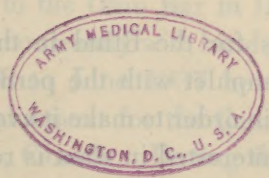


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NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL  
DIV. OF MED. SCIENCES  
Office of Medical Information

# OPEN LETTER TO MY NEWLY BLINDED FRIEND



## FOREWORD

THIS PAMPHLET, written by Joseph F. Clunk, formerly Chief, Services for the Blind, U. S. Office of Education, and now Chief, Services for the Blind in the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Federal Security Agency, was originally published early in the year 1944 by the National Society for the Blind, Inc., as an "Open Letter to My Newly Blinded Friend in the Armed Forces." Since its issuance there has been such a demand for it that the Society has been unable to supply all the copies needed.

Several National agencies have requested that the pamphlet, with minor editorial changes, be published as an "Open Letter to My Newly Blinded Friend," so that it will be of universal appeal and value to the blind. When one considers that each year, even in normal peacetimes, there are approximately thirty thousand new cases of blindness among the civilian population of the United States, as a result of accidents and disease, the greater proportion of which are adult cases, one begins to realize the unusual value of definite assistance and assurance to newly blinded persons in their initial adjustments, such as this pamphlet gives in such straightforward, self-reliant manner.

Accordingly, the Services for the Blind in the U. S. Office of Education is issuing the pamphlet with the permission of the National Society for the Blind, in order to make it available to a greater number of people who are interested in what is really a primer for the personal adjustment of newly blinded persons.

**C. F. KLINEFELTER,**  
*Assistant to the Commissioner, U. S. Office of Education.*



# INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

JOSEPH F. CLUNK was born in Lisbon, Ohio, in 1895. He was graduated from high school in 1915 and attended Western Reserve University from 1915 to 1917. He was married in March 1918.

In the fall of 1918, while employed as a salesman, he awakened one morning with an iritis condition, and after some months in a hospital, at the age of 23, he was dismissed in February 1919 as permanently blind.

He began traveling alone in Cleveland, Ohio, on March 24, 1919, and began work as a salesman on April 7, 1919.

From January to August 1920 he was employed as placement agent by the Cleveland Society for the Blind, and developed the method of placing blind persons in industries by demonstration, and simultaneously established the principle of permanent supervision.

From August 1920 to May 1928 he was employed as Executive Secretary of the Youngstown, Ohio, Society for the Blind and conducted a complete social service and employment program for blind persons. During this time he attended night law school 4 years and was admitted to the Ohio Bar in December 1925, after which he practiced law concurrently with his duties as Executive Secretary.

From May 1928 to June 1937 he was employed as National Supervisor of Employment for the Canadian National Institute for the Blind, Toronto, Canada. During this period he traveled from 25,000 to 40,000 miles per year in the Dominion without a guide, placing blind persons in all types of industry, small businesses, refreshment stands in private and public buildings, and established the first industrial lunch service to be operated by blind persons. A staff of blind and sighted persons was trained for this work, and more than \$1,000,000 of income was produced for blind persons during this period.

From June 1937 to the present time, Mr. Clunk was in charge of the Services for the Blind in the U. S. Office of Education. On

May 22, 1944, he became Chief, Services for the Blind in the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Federal Security Agency. He has worked in all the States developing industrial employment and training placement agents, establishing and supervising stand programs under the Randolph-Sheppard Act, advising agencies for the blind regarding all their problems, and inspiring them to develop employment opportunities for the blind.

Even during the depression Mr. Clunk continued to place blind persons in ordinary occupations and kept the principle alive when others considered it impractical. Undoubtedly the present acceptance of blind persons in war industries is largely a result of Mr. Clunk's activity. No one we know of has done or is doing more than Mr. Clunk by practical demonstration and personal example to build the confidence of the sighted world in the abilities of the blind.

Maj. Walter E. Barton, Office of the Surgeon General, U. S. War Department, says "This letter is a real map of an unfamiliar road spread out before one as he is about to make a trip. It sounds as though the experience would be an exciting adventure, full of hazards and hardships, but with happiness as its goal. The possession of the paper brings security, for the traveler who has prepared the guide is experienced and has himself overcome the obstacles related."

**LAWRENCE Q. LEWIS,**

**Exec. Director, National Society for the Blind.**



# OPEN LETTER TO MY NEWLY BLINDED FRIEND

**T**HIS NEW WORLD into which you have been introduced presents some new problems to you, and as an old resident in this environment, I believe I can save you a few unpleasant experiences and provide you with some shortcuts to that final adjustment which you are now seeking. Your friends, your neighbors, your family, and absolute strangers will give you much advice and some of it will be good, but much of it will be useless.

The atmosphere around you will be saturated with emotionalism, most of which will impress upon you the idea that you have lost at least one or perhaps all of your five senses, that you are totally disabled, that you either cannot, or are not expected to do anything for yourself, your family, or your community. Other emotional barrages will inform you that you are a superman, that you are marvelous, wonderful, and that your intelligence and ability surpass all the rest of mankind; that you are entitled to everything—material, spiritual, and otherwise—that the world has to offer; and that you should not pay anything for what you receive. The simplest activity on your part will bring forth a gush of praise and admiration and you will find that it is almost impossible to secure an impersonal measurement of your performance as compared with that of sighted persons doing the same thing.

I remember the first reed lamp and sewing basket that I made for a friendly neighbor. She led me to believe that I had created the most artistic and the most ornamental and useful two items the world had ever produced. The fact was that the lamp was so crooked and unsightly that it was not even a good product for a 5-year-old to make in a kindergarten and the sewing basket was so poorly and loosely woven that I doubt that it could have held potatoes, let alone needles, thread, etc. I have not seen this neighbor for 25 years, but when I do meet her my first inquiry will be as to whether or not she burned those two items as soon as she took them home. I sincerely hope she did.

It is impossible for me to emphasize in polite language the necessity for always paying for what you get. If someone takes you across the street, that person is entitled to friendly companionship on your part in exchange for the friendly companionship he is giving you. If you do not pay for services in this manner, you will find that sighted persons will let you stand on the street corner longer than is necessary. Merchants will offer you discounts on merchandise, but if you accept these just because of your blindness, those merchants soon weary of their bargain and lose their desire to serve you.

This new world will provide you with a need for continuous vigilance to maintain your normal point of view, but in this exercise of vigilance you will find many new and interesting phases of life that would never come to you otherwise. You will see the real personalities of people and you will not be fooled by their exterior appearance. You will find that this world is full of sincere honest friends and that the small percentage of dishonest folks are easily detected and they do not fool you.

Out of my sum total of experience, I want to offer you a few suggestions to assist you in your immediate adjustment, and in order to avoid confusion I shall list each of these under separate headings.

## **ORIENTATION**

Regardless of church affiliation, most persons believe in the first commandment or something similar to it. Idolatry is not practiced by many intelligent persons of our day. We must all realize that the worship of one God and the possession of absolute faith in that one God does not permit the companion worship of fear at the same time. However, the elimination of fear does not entitle us to do foolhardy things, and calm judgment must always be used in approaching any enterprise or activity. There is a vast difference between the exercise of caution and domination by fear.

Most newly blinded persons are confused because of panic and fear and not because of lack of ability to determine directions and the location of objects. Fear in its various forms is the worst problem and must be eliminated as quickly as possible.

Practically all sighted and most newly blinded persons think of sight as one of the five senses and, accordingly, establish a false



premise in their approach to the adjustment problem. Vision is actually the faculty of comprehension and of understanding. Vision is a mental ability and is destroyed only with the loss of mind. Sight is measured by the efficiency of the eye to gather reflected light rays and to transmit them to that portion of the brain which registers them and translates the reflection into vision. Sight enables the person to observe objects at a convenient distance, and it is in the same relationship to vision as the hands are to the sense of touch. The amputation of the hands does not destroy the person's ability to feel, and the loss of sight does not destroy the person's ability to see, although in each case the loss is the loss of a convenience and is therefore only an inconvenience. A moron may have perfect sight and yet may not comprehend or actually see an object, or may not remember the identity of that which is shown to him.

All sighted persons do many blindisms every day. Objects are sorted out of pockets and desk drawers, and are identified on high shelves and at night in darkened rooms without the use of sight. The sorting and identification is just as accurate as though sight were employed.

Sit in a comfortable chair, eliminate muscle and nerve tensions, maintain that same condition regardless of what you may be doing unless the particular task requires muscle and nerve tension to perform it; the tension is then established because of the task and not because of blindness. Watch directions and the position-relationship of objects to each other. Inquire as to the position of north, south, east, and west with relationship to your room, the front door of your home, or of the building. When going any place, check the direction you are traveling and make your own mental map of the area, regardless of whether it is in your room, the building in which you work, or the town in which you reside. If you have difficulty in visualizing directions, then compare the directions given for a strange place with your former knowledge of directions in a town or place you know thoroughly. If the main street in your hometown runs north and south, then compare that with your new environment. If you seek a place on the south side of the street four blocks east of your present starting point, then visualize that as it would be in your hometown in a similar or

related position from your home or any other familiar starting point.

There are always landmarks for everything you wish to find. In your room, it may be the window on the east side of the room, or it may be your radio on the north side and near your bed. Out in the yard your anchor point may be a bush, a garage, a clothes line post, or a neighbor's dog that is in the kennel and that barks from time to time. In finding a store of a particular kind, your landmark may be a revolving door in the middle of the block, a music store with a noisy radio or record player, a drug store with its familiar odor, a news boy calling his papers at a particular corner, a recessed doorway with an unusual echo to your cane or whistle, a steel cellar door that forms part of the sidewalk, a broken bit of paving, or an unusually smooth part of the street. In finding your own residence or a friend's house, your landmark may be a bush at the sidewalk edge, a fire hydrant next door or two doors away, or at the friend's own lot, a pair of steps different from others, a double cement driveway or a gravel one, a telephone or light pole at a particular place nearby, or perhaps a fence of some kind one or two doors up the street. Such landmarks are always to be had near the place you wish to visit often or where you live. Listen carefully for characteristic sounds of all kinds, identify them and learn to interpret them subconsciously and automatically.

## **PERCEPTION OF OBJECTS**

Every object with much surface can be located without touching it and at a safe distance. To cultivate this ability, go out into the yard or any open space where you will be influenced by only the one object you wish to find. Starting at a distance of at least 100 feet from the wall of the building or house, walk toward the wall, slowly, leisurely, and perfectly relaxed. Watch carefully for the time when you begin to feel the presence of something in front of you. It will be registered on the nerves of your face around the eyes. In a sense you will feel as though you were walking into a shadow. At first you may walk entirely to the wall before you realize its presence, but a little practice and conscious effort will soon enable you to detect its presence and almost its exact distance anywhere from 10 to 50 feet away, and you can walk in a parallel line to it by maintaining uniform atmospheric pressure



upon your face without touching the wall with either a cane or your hand. This ability is not so easily or definitely developed by a newly blinded person in a room because of the overall pressure of the ceiling, walls, and other objects. Walk slowly down the street and observe your reactions as you pass trees, poles, cars, and similar objects. When you think you are passing a tree or pole, check the fact by walking up to the object and notice the distance you were from it when you first registered the impressions. You will find that your ability to detect objects will vary under certain conditions and with different conditions of health. Some of us find it easier to detect objects when there is a lot of moisture in the air or when the air is particularly dry. Some of us find that brilliant sunshine and strong winds dull this perceptive ability and most of us have difficulty when there is a lot of noise such as produced by a nearby train, riveting hammers, noisy truck engines, coaster wagons, and similar sound screens. Apparently these stronger waves of sound traveling through the air overwhelm the more delicate waves radiating from the inanimate pole, tree, or building wall. You will find this perceptive ability of value when you are strolling in the business area and the building pressure disappears when you come to the street corner. It is an ability that will come to you ultimately, but if you consciously work toward its development, your ability to travel easily will be much accelerated.

## USE OF CANE

Carry a light cane when out in the street and traveling away from home or office. This cane should be long enough to reach from the ground up to a distance about half way between your wrist and elbow when your arm is hanging relaxed at your side and you are standing in your normal manner. Do not use a cane that is so short you must stoop to touch the grass at the side of the walk. Do not use a cane that is so long that it gets in your way when you use it as a swagger stick and a part of your ordinary dress for the street. Metal tips are popular because they provide a sharp echo that is useful in locating open doors, areaways, stairways, and the proximity of building walls. Do not pound the sidewalk with your cane. If you are approaching a curb, or a flight of steps or think you are, stroll leisurely toward them and permit the cane to slide

over the walk or floor just about 6 inches in front of your forward foot, until the cane comes in contact with the edge of the step and goes over or contacts the base of the step and you will then know whether you should step up or down. If you are on unfamiliar ground and your cane goes down, pause long enough to reach down with your cane to locate the depth of the step, and if you are going up, use the cane to determine if the second or third step is in place as you ascend by simply permitting the cane to touch lightly against each riser as you lift your foot. Sometimes basement stairways on the outside of the buildings have one step up before they go down, and the assumption that one step up is always an upstairsway may cause an undignified fall when you least desire it.

In going down stairs a cane is unnecessary after the first and second step is located for you will get all required information on the descent through your feet and through the hand rail if one exists.

In going through revolving doors, swing your cane across the door in such a manner as to permit the wing of the door to hit the shaft of the cane and push it toward your body. This enables you to tell exactly when a door section is in front of you and its exact position with regard to your own body. A few seconds of observation is enough to tell you how fast the door is revolving, and you can pivot on one foot and swing into a section just as it goes past you and you do not interfere with others using the door. Do not point your cane into the door and thus have the door push it back at you as though it were a spear. Do not put your arm into the door to find an opening, unless the door is absolutely still and is not revolving. When entering swinging doors, use your cane to determine location and do not permit your hands to get into the opening between doors as one of them may close on your fingers. Locate the bar at the center of one side of the door and push or pull in the normal manner.

In streetcars, buses, and trains where you may have to ride standing for some time, a cane is a good support to keep you from losing your balance until you can easily find a strap or other support. A cane should be light enough to be easily handled, strong enough to support your weight without bending when you use it as a support, and should have a curved handle that fits your hand easily and comfortably. Knob handles are not practical.



## WALKING

Do not attempt to pass everything on the street as you stroll along. Sighted persons will pass you and you will resent your inability to keep up with them. Remember that when you are walking hurriedly and with tensed muscles you are in no position to stop instantly if a barrier of any kind is across your path. Small wagons, kiddie cars, tricycles and bicycles, sidewalk repairs, and baby carriages all form interesting problems in any residential area and some of them are encountered in business districts. It is the old story of the turtle and the rabbit. You may not walk as rapidly as your neighbor but you will get to your destination just about as quickly, and when you do not attempt to race you will arrive in good condition. Always walk easily and relaxed, and in a natural strolling manner. Keep your arms down at your side, except when you are approaching a door in a room and then you should develop the habit of holding one arm across your waist and close to the body until you contact the door. If the door is partially open, it will hit the side of your arm and not your face. An outstretched arm straight in front of you can easily miss a door and the result is not desirable.

In the residential areas, walk on that side of the walk which does not have any hydrants. Permit your cane to hang loosely at your side and to touch the grass at the edge of the walk. The tip of the cane can drag in the grass a little behind you and you can easily keep your direction or line with the sidewalk by maintaining the necessary angle of relationship between your body and the cane. If the poles, fire hydrants, mail boxes, and similar objects are on the inside edge of the walk, then use the outside or curb side of the walk as your guide, but keep alert for open overhanging doors when you are passing parked cars.

Practice walking along the street without touching cane to sidewalk. At first you will get off the sidewalk in a short distance, but you will be able to travel a half block or more in a short time. When crossing a street, line up your body with the curb before you step off and aim yourself at the opposite sidewalk. At first you will go to either right or left and this may cause you either to get into the traffic of the street you are traveling or to contact a parked car on the side street you are crossing. Walking without using a

cane to touch the grass or curb will soon enable you to cross streets accurately. Always swing your cane gently and easily in front of you as you step up on a curb and do not rush. The nonchalantly swung cane across your body as you step up on a curb will save you from contacting small poles, trees, and guy wires. Do not whip or beat the air with your cane. You can detect the curve of the street, the slope of the intersecting sidewalk and other necessary items with your feet and without obvious effort of attention.

Practice carrying a fairly heavy package under your arm, or a suitcase with an average load. You will find that any such package will have a tendency to swing you to the side on which the package is carried and you will have to develop the ability to counteract this influence. Practically everyone walks in a circle when lost in the woods or in a dense fog, and our problem is that of counteracting this natural tendency, regardless of whether or not we are carrying packages. You should also practice using the cane in either hand.

When crossing any average residential street, always pause at the curb long enough to set yourself so that you will travel at right angles with the line of the curb and also to listen for traffic noises. If a noisy car, a coaster wagon, a peanut vendor's whistle, a train, or any other noise is dominating the atmosphere, it will set up a sound screen that drowns out the noise of a quietly moving car. Wait at the curb until the sound screen is removed or until a sighted pedestrian comes along who will take you across the street, or until you are able to shut out the dominating noise and hear the lesser sounds of traffic. You can screen out the louder noises most of the time. In business areas where traffic is dense, you will usually find a considerable pedestrian group also. Do not hesitate to ask someone standing beside you to walk across the street with you when traffic conditions permit. Under no circumstances should you walk across a busy traffic thoroughfare alone unless you are absolutely certain of traffic rules and you know that right- and left-hand turns are not permitted on that corner.

When you get off the streetcar, stand for a few seconds at the side of the car before you start for the curb. This will give you an opportunity to detect any automobile that is passing your open streetcar door while it is unloading passengers. After that you can proceed to the sidewalk without difficulty. I had an experience



very early in this sport when I got off the streetcar in a suburban area and without inspection I started for the sidewalk. There was a newly dug ditch between the streetcar and the sidewalk, as indicated by newly dug earth, into which I walked. Although I could not reach the opposite side with my cane, I thought I could jump across it without difficulty. It was only about 3 feet deep and the dry cleaners got some work the next morning. We all learn that it pays to stop, look, and listen.

When you are walking with a sighted friend, place your hand lightly on the arm of your friend and allow that person to lead you without strain or effort on his part. It is very much like your dancing partner following your lead on the dance floor, and if you go to dances your sighted girl will do the leading and you will learn to follow. If you permit your sighted companion to take your arm and try to guide you down the street, you will find that your friend is pushing and pulling and that the friend has a difficult time swinging your weight around obstructions. You will also find that your hand on the arm of your friend will give you sufficient warning of steps up or down when you reach street crossings and you can easily follow your friend around poles, trees, and other obstructions. Of course you will require your cane at street crossings and in going up and down steps, but you will learn to do this automatically by carrying your cane in the free hand. The same procedure is followed when you go into restaurants, hotels, theaters, and other places without a sighted companion and you use the services of waiters and red caps in directing you to a table in the restaurant or your room in a hotel.

I know of one blind man who weighed about 200 pounds and who wanted to get off a city streetcar. A husky conductor got on one side of him and an equally burly policeman on the other. Each got hold of an arm and as he tried to step off the car they lifted him up, and as a result he found himself hanging in mid air like a clock pendulum and each of his two friendly temporary companions found themselves with a real load on their hands. Our blind friend finally persuaded them to let go so he could get his feet on the step and walk to the sidewalk.

## **PERSONAL APPEARANCE**

A blind person is always on parade, and is as conspicuous as though placed in the best show window of the most popular street in town. Check clothing style changes with your real friends and keep up to date as much as your circumstances permit. Correct factual information about personal appearance and condition of clothing, hands, hair, and other items of personal appearance is extremely difficult to secure. Eternal vigilance is required by all of us. Cherish and cultivate those rare sighted persons who are sincerely honest and constructive in their information to you on personal matters. Sighted persons do all their checking by observation, but we must depend upon our real friends. I have known blind persons to continue to wear the same type of shirts, collars, and suits as were in vogue when sight was lost 25 years before, and, as the result, they were walking examples of the style ads of a previous generation.

## **TABLE ETIQUETTE**

Practice your normal methods of handling food. Some persons like to know where various items are located on a dinner plate and they use the clock method of location. Thus, meat may be said to be at 6 o'clock, potatoes at 3, and peas at 12. Others like the fun of finding out for themselves and of biting into pickle when they expected carrot. Let your sighted companion cut up your difficult meats, or ask the waiter to do it for you. Practice cutting meats at home where the spilling of gravy may not be so embarrassing. Use ordinary tools in the ordinary way and visualize your operations as you perform them.

## **SMOKING**

There has been much false publicity to the effect that blind persons do not enjoy smoking because they cannot see the smoke. If you like to smoke, if it gives you pleasure and is not injurious to your health, then smoke in the same manner and in the same places as do your sighted friends. You can easily light a cigarette by touching the end of the cigarette with the tip of the second or third finger of your hand and bringing the lighted match that is held in between the thumb and the forefinger of the same hand to the end



of the cigarette. A pipe is easily followed by the hand holding the match. Always be certain that your matches are extinguished before you throw them away.

## **BRAILLE**

If you were fond of reading, then learn Braille from a competent instructor. Do not work too hard at it at first. Relax the muscles of the arm and stop when your arm begins to feel tired. At first this fatigue will occur in from 3 to 5 minutes, but the period will increase as you become accustomed to the exercise. Secure a post card Braille slate and use it for personal notes, such as phone numbers, addresses, and other memoranda. This information can be kept on 3 x 5 cards that are easily carried in your coat pocket. Ability to use Braille is a decided asset in your daily living, but it is not vital to a successful career. If you have not learned Braille while in the hospital or in a training center before returning home, you can secure this instruction from a home teacher employed by the State agency for the blind. A list of such agencies is attached to this publication. You can write to the agency in your State, and the director will be more than glad to give you all possible and available information and assistance. Home teachers are provided at State expense and there is no cost to you.

## **TALKING BOOK**

The present methods of recording books on flat disk records is the most convenient method available to bring you a fairly wide variety of literature and without much effort. The Library of Congress spends more than \$200,000 a year in recording books and distributes them through regional libraries. You can find the regional library serving your area by writing the Library of Congress, Washington, D. C., for the information. The records can be played on any modern record playing equipment when the turntable has a constant speed of  $33\frac{1}{3}$  revolutions per minute and where the tone arm has a light pressure on the needle point. If you do not have a suitable record player, you can borrow one without charge from the Library of Congress through your State agency for the blind, and the regional library will provide you with a catalog of available recordings. These records are sent without postage through the mail.

## HANDWRITING

It is advisable that you keep in practice in handwriting, not only for signature of your own name, but also in order that you may make notes for others to read. Writing boards made of cardboard are available. These boards or guides have grooves something like a washboard, except that the bottom of the groove is flat and as wide as an ordinary linespace. Hundreds of blind persons have designed wide varieties of writing boards or guides, to enable them to keep their lines straight and not to write over previous lines. The most practical styles are those using a straight piece of material, such as wood, metal, or cardboard laid across the page, and held with some simple clamp or clip. A row of holes or other indicators on the edges of the board base permits moving the line guide down the proper distance. Whether you do much writing of letters or not, at least keep in practice in signing your name and in making short simple notes with pen or pencil.

Some persons use a short piece of cardboard or celluloid or other similar material as a line guide when signing checks or endorsing them. A sighted friend can place this line guide in the proper position and then you can easily sign your name just above the guide, using its edge for the bottom of your signature. When endorsing checks, some of us fold the check over so as to use the folded edge as a guide line for the signature.

## TYPEWRITING

You can memorize the keyboard of a standard typewriter in from 3 to 8 hours of instruction, and you can learn the basic principles of the so-called touch typing at the same time. A portable typewriter will be invaluable to you for personal correspondence and for all the general writing you may wish to do at a desk. It is easy to devise your own methods of spacing for letterheads, if you use them, and for setting the tabulating keys to give you proper spacing for envelopes when addressing them. The home teacher who gives you instruction in Braille will also give you instruction in typing. I memorized the keyboard in a few afternoons and then developed a little speed by writing letters to everyone I had ever known, and when I had no letters to write, I wrote



articles for imaginary magazines and newspapers, and although these articles never got to an editor, they did give me the necessary practice. If you are in a hospital when you are learning typing, you might try writing letters for your sighted hospital roommates and for the nurses who do not have time to write back home.

## RECREATION

While it may not be possible for you to indulge as easily in all games and recreations you formerly enjoyed, you can continue with most of them and you can add on others. A pleasant-voiced sighted companion can fill in the gaps in your observation of theater plays and movies, and can give you most of the action of a football or baseball game, a track and field meet, and the scenery found on a boat ride or a hike through the country. You can play chess, checkers, and similar games with your sighted friends, as well as bridge and poker. Brailled cards and other game materials can be secured at low prices from the American Foundation for the Blind, 15 West 16th Street, New York City, and several other sources about which your home teacher can easily tell you.

Many blind persons are expert radio builders and operators, craftsmen in wood, metal, and other materials involving the use of all the regular hand and power tools that can be put in a home basement or shop. A number of us build furniture for friends as a pastime and two of my blind friends remodeled their houses. Some build boats, fishing shacks for summer and winter use, summer cottages, ladders, and many other articles. One young man constructed his entire seven-room house and the last time I visited him he was half way through the construction of a two-story chicken house that was 30 feet wide and 50 feet in length and that was designed to hold about one thousand chickens.

Other home recreations are truck and flower gardening, dog and bird breeding, and kindred activities. Maintain the widest possible variety of hobby interests and expand these interests as rapidly and as fast as possible. Do not worry about whether or not other blind persons have done a particular thing, if you like to do it and can devise a way to achieve a satisfactory result, then by all means proceed. Always remember that you learn by asking questions of your sighted friends.

## **POSTURE**

Far too many blind persons develop unnecessary and undesirable posture habits, such as one or more of the following:

Stiffen the spine and sit and stand as though it were made of steel; hold the head high in the air and tip it back on the shoulder; develop a stoop and look down at the ground; hold the head sideways as though it were resting on one shoulder; lift the feet and walk as though trained in a stubble field; shuffle as if looking for obstructions; and many bend their bodies in the middle when standing as though they were going to slump to the ground.

Check your posture with your critical friends and cultivate normal posture habits. Relax your muscles at every possible opportunity. When sitting in a chair, standing, or walking—be yourself.

## **FACIAL EXPRESSION**

A baby learns to smile by observing your smile and facial expression is developed by imitation and observation. After blindness many persons lose their normal facial expression because they do not imitate. It is necessary to preserve facial expression consciously until it again becomes a habit. Look at the person to whom you are talking. Look at the objects you are observing. Turn your face and eyes toward the object of your observation just as though you were seeing through your eyes. Do not permit yourself to acquire an expressionless, frozen face. Smile, don't grin. Consciously and purposely maintain the flexibility of all the facial muscles by constant use. Remember that you did not like to talk to people who were apparently not interested in your conversation and you judged that interest very largely through the expression on their faces. If you develop an expressionless face, your sighted friends will have no indication as to whether or not you are interested in their conversations, and they may gradually learn to avoid you because they believe you do not enjoy their company. An easy overall smiling countenance will pay you larger dividends than any other activity you will find.

## **SHAVING**

I know some men who continue to use the old-fashioned straight edge razor and they still have both ears. Most of us, however, are



sissies and we use standard safety razors. You may have difficulty in maintaining a sideburn line and you may get one side higher than the other. If you need a guide, then secure a pair of cheap metal-framed glasses at any dime store and bend the shaft of the temple bar where it starts to go over your ear. Put these glasses on after you have put on the lather and use the bent temple bar as the limiting guide for your razor. This bent bar should come down on a line with that portion of your ear which you wish to use as the level for sideburns. For most of us this is on a line with the cheek bone and the outside corner of the eye. If you can keep these sideburns straight without such a guide and by simply using the cheek bone or something else as an indicator, then, of course, the temple bar is unnecessary. Shave every day, because if you don't your friends will blame your condition upon your blindness and not upon your laziness, and that of course would be misrepresentation.

## GLASSES

If your sight is not sufficient to be of practical use to you on the street, wear shaded glasses of the density of a number 4 or 5 Crooks lens. That will inform others when you bump them that you did not see them and that you are not off your track because you are intoxicated. When you cannot see the face and eyes of your companion, it is possible to turn the eyes too much and to show too much of the whites. Artificial eyes frequently get turned in the sockets without your knowing it and this is disconcerting to many persons. Shaded glasses avoid this unpleasant result. Glasses should be fitted to your face and they must be comfortable. Frosted glasses are favored by a few blind persons and are desirable if the eyes or sockets are sore, or if the sockets are empty. Information about artificial eyes can be secured from your State agency for the blind, or from the Veterans' Administration. If one or both eyes are removed, artificial ones should be fitted and worn just as soon as the socket condition permits.

One of the favorite stories concerning artificial eyes is that told about the Scottish banker who had one good eye and one artificial one. He was very proud of the matching and thought that no one could detect the difference. One day a man made application for a loan and the banker did not want to grant it. He had no really

good reason, and finally said to the prospective borrower: "I have an artificial eye and if you can tell me which one it is I shall grant the loan." The man looked at the banker and then said, "I think it is the left one." The banker was amazed and asked, "How did you know?" The other fellow replied, "I thought I detected a little gleam of sympathy in that eye."

In all seriousness, properly fitted artificial eyes look very good even though they don't see much and they make you much more acceptable socially than you will be with empty sockets.

## **FAMILY RELATIONS**

Do not let the family become your slaves. Regardless of their love for you and their devotion to you, it is unnecessary and unfair to permit any one or all of them to become a martyr to your personal convenience. Do your share of the work around the house, and you can do as much as any of them. Pay your share of the family expenses, and do your share of entertaining. Let them move the furniture around as much as they would normally do. A changed room scene is just as important to you as it is to them. Let them read to you when they wish to do so, but do not expect any of them to drop everything at your call and do just what you want at that moment. Secure their mutual admiration and respect by constantly expanding your services to and with them, and by your performance, make them also forget your visual difficulty.

## **DOG GUIDES**

Many of your friends and most casual acquaintances will talk to you about the necessity for your securing a dog guide and many different types of recommendations will be made to you. The best informed dog guide agencies declare that about 10 percent of the blind group can properly use a dog guide. Whether you acquire a dog guide or not must be determined entirely by your own needs. There are many circumstances in which you might live where a dog guide would be invaluable to you. If, for example, you live on a farm and you do your share of the farm work; such as repairing fences, doing barn chores, and feeding livestock, a dog guide will take you to your particular task without your imposing upon other members of the family for guide service.



There are many persons who find a dog guide of considerable value in city life, but there are also many persons who have found that city life is not compatible with the use of a dog guide. In the final analysis you must determine whether or not you need this particular type of equipment and whether or not it can be of practical use in your daily living. I strongly suggest that you wait at least a year after you have been discharged from the hospital and have become established in the beginnings of your permanent career and you have had an opportunity to measure your own strength of character and the requirements of your daily life. After your own physical, spiritual, and mental adjustment has been made in your new world, then use whatever tools you require to make your life of maximum value, and if a dog guide assists you in securing these results, then by all means contact one of the various organizations engaged in the training and distribution of dog guides and any State or National agency for the blind will be glad to assist you in the making of arrangements.

## PENSIONS

If you have been injured in line of duty with the armed forces, you will undoubtedly receive a substantial lifetime income as the country's recognition of your service. There may be a tendency on your part to consider that this pension is more than enough for your physical needs and there is no necessity for you to be concerned about any other activity or employment that will produce additional income. Perhaps you never expected to make more than \$100 or \$200 per month, and your pension takes care of this nicely, but there is no day quite so long as that day in which you have nothing to do. Your pension should be considered as extra money that will buy you the luxuries which you might not otherwise have the ability to secure even if your sight had not been lost. You can earn just as much without your sight as you would have earned with it in any trade, business, or profession. If you like factory work you can be placed in it and you can make the same wages as your sighted friends. Suppose you earn \$40 per week at the job and this is enough for your ordinary daily needs, you can then use your pension to buy a better home than you would otherwise possess and you can send your children to college when you might otherwise not be able to do so.

Perhaps you had planned on a professional career and you now doubt your ability to continue. I know blind persons whose incomes in professional fields are from \$5,000 to \$10,000 per year, and we have reports from responsible agencies for the blind indicating that blind persons are earning just as much in the professions as successful sighted persons. You may continue your profession and earn your normal income, and your pension can be used to provide a summer cottage or other luxuries in addition to enabling you to pay for extra stenographic and reader service. Regardless of your ordinary standard of living, or of how much you may earn, you should consider your pension as something with which you will buy a few extra luxuries, or with which you will build an estate for your family, who will then take care of your responsibilities if you should not live long enough to take care of them yourself.

If you have been blinded in line of duty, there are at least two different plans available to you for permanent income. One is retirement from the armed forces which at the moment is computed on a percentage of your base pay. The other alternative is a pension that is computed on the degree of your blindness. If you have only light perception or less, you may receive \$175 per month as a lifetime pension. If your sight is less than 20/200 or close to within the present-day definition of blindness because of limitation of field, your rate of pension is proportionate. I understand you can elect to accept that which is to your advantage, and your income from this source is not affected by your earnings after you are discharged from the service.

Because of the many variations in establishing claims, I urge you to consult the representatives of the Veterans' Administration, Washington, D. C., just as soon as possible and secure up-to-the-minute information on all these problems. Changes in legislation and regulations occur frequently and anything I might give you here could easily be out of date within a short time. If in addition to blindness you have suffered other impairment, it is possible at the present time for you to receive up to \$250 a month. You will find the officials of the Veterans' Administration glad to give you all possible assistance and prompt service.



## INSURANCE

You can buy any kind of life insurance you desire from all of the standard old-line companies. Some charge a little extra premium, but a number of them do not.

However, if you are a veteran of the armed forces and you were a wise young man, you have probably purchased government insurance while in the service and you should investigate the options available to you through that contract. If you are considered totally disabled by the complete loss of sight, it is likely that your premiums will be waived and your insurance will continue in effect without further payment on your part. Investigate thoroughly before you allow your policy to lapse through nonpayment of premiums and before you purchase insurance elsewhere. The Insurance Department of the Veterans' Administration, Washington, D. C., will give you complete information on this subject and the conditions upon which you can continue your government insurance will be determined by the rating you receive as to physical condition upon your discharge from the armed forces.

## WATCHES

Whenever I think of this item, I am reminded of a wealthy retired industrialist whose major problem was that of keeping track of time throughout the day. He annoyed his wife considerably by awaking her at all hours of the night and asking her for the time.

There are various kinds of special dials for watches that you can secure either to fit your own favorite watch, or you can buy a new watch complete with a special dial. Some use Braille characters at each hour, some have a large dot or two small ones at 12, 3, 6 and 9, with a small dot at each of the other hours. If you cannot secure a special dial to fit your watch or a new watch with a dial, you can have the crystal removed from your own watch and the jeweler can notch the crystal ring with a file and these markings will assist you.

On the special-made watches, the hands are heavier than average and, of course, all pocket watches of this kind are of the hunting case type. Wrist watches are available with the Braille dial and a hinged crystal so that it opens in the same manner as a hunting case.

You may also like to have one of the types of chime watches

where the time is given you by the ringing of a chime inside the case when you release the spring. There are so many varieties of chime watches that I shall not attempt to describe them.

These various types of watches can be secured through the American Foundation for the Blind, 15 West 16th Street, New York City.

If you desire an alarm clock, you can easily adapt your own or any standard alarm clock to your needs by removing the glass crystal and by having your jeweler friend place rivets at the various numbers in a manner similar to the watch dial. Many of us simply take the glass off the alarm clock and depend upon our ability to ascertain the angles of the position of the hands without special dial markings. However, this is not very satisfactory when setting the alarm, and markings around this little circle are very helpful.

## **NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS FOR THE BLIND**

There are several hundred agencies for the blind in the United States. Some of them specialize in limited fields of service, such as the publishing of Braille and other raised types of literature, the operation of refreshment stands, the operation of special workshops and homes, the prevention of blindness and restoration of sight, social and recreational activities, collection and distribution of information, and assistance to agencies for the blind. A few organizations attempt to cover all these fields in a local area.

There are a few national sources of information and services with which you should establish and maintain contact, and these agencies will either provide you with the service, or direct you to the national or local organizations that will give you the most effective specialized service you require at the moment. These agencies are:

Service for the Blind, Veterans' Administration; Services for the Blind, Federal Security Agency; National Society for the Blind, Woodward Building, and these are all in Washington, D. C.; also American Foundation for the Blind, 15 West 16th Street, New York City.

Your State agency for the blind, which is included in the list at the end of this publication, can secure all the information and service which you may desire on any phase of services to blind persons, regardless of the agency that will ultimately provide it.



## MARRIAGE

If you are unmarried, you are probably thinking much about the difficulty of establishing your own home and you are in doubt as to whether or not the sighted girls you knew will have anything to do with you. If you are married and you have not yet returned home, you may be wondering just how your wife will receive you and how she will look upon future life with you.

There are thousands of normal homes in which the husband is without sight and where the wife and the children enjoy just as high a standard of living as though the husband were sighted. The relationship depends upon the way you play the game.

If you are unmarried and you go out socially with sighted girls you should conduct yourself in the same manner as though sight were not lost. In other words, you should take the young lady home and not expect her to take you home and then to go to her own residence by cab or by some other means. She has a right to expect you to call for her and to be on time, and the ordinary rules of social companionship must be observed without any apology for your own personal inconvenience. If you are already married, you can conduct yourself in such a manner as not to lean on your children or your wife. If you so desire you can live in such a manner as to justify the family saying, "We just forget that dad cannot see."

## EMPLOYMENT

Man's field of opportunity is limited by his mentality and not alone by physical imperfection. If physical perfection were a requisite for success, then this world would have made little progress and there would always be a labor shortage regardless of economic conditions. Every activity of mankind has in it some full-time phase that can be performed without sight and you can find it in your own particular trade or profession. It is not a question of, "What can a blind person do?" Rather, it is a question of, "What do you want to do?" A partial list of occupations and activities successfully performed by blind persons is included in this publication. No one but you can define the limitations of

yourself. You, and you only, can do that. The first verse of the poem "Invictus," by William Henley describes the exact situation:

*"Out of the night that covers me  
Black as the pit from pole to pole,  
I thank whatever Gods may be  
For my unconquerable soul."*

A handicap is sometimes defined as—"an extra burden placed on a superior contender to equalize the contest."

Remember that the loss of sight is but the loss of a convenience. Since you still have vision and a normal mind, this extra burden is but a challenge to you and it is an opportunity for you to prove that you are a superior contender and that you are still in all the competitions of life. Play blindness as a game, not as a calamity. When you violate rules, you will get your penalty immediately and without argument as to whether the referee was right or wrong. Accept the bump, the fall, the temporary blockade as one of the items in the game, just as you did in football, in boxing, or in any other game you ever played. Your assets are much greater than your liabilities. You have much more left than you have lost. You are not bankrupt, and you never will be unless you will it so. The only person in this world that can keep you down, that can defeat you, is yourself. You didn't learn to play football the first day you went out on the field, and this life in the new world is not learned within a few minutes. On the other hand, proficiency in its various activities is not acquired by sitting in an arm chair or by making excuses for nonperformance. A failure in life can give you a thousand reasons for his results, and he always blames the other fellow for his failures. The successful person finds just as many reasons for positive action and the results are more satisfactory. The man who "passes the buck" for his nonperformance might be described as "The fellow who is never wrong is seldom right." Your standards of achievement must be measured with the achievements of your successful sighted friends and not with the failures of your neighbors.

Please remember that the loss of sight is not an affliction, and real happiness in living is achieved by successful friendly competition in the art of living, and in this competition you have a decided advantage.



# *The Agency for the Blind in Your State Will Welcome an Opportunity to Serve You*

<b>ALABAMA:</b>	Department for Education of Adult Blind Talladega
<b>ARIZONA:</b>	Arizona State School for the Deaf and the Blind W. Speedway and Grand Avenue, Tucson
<b>ARKANSAS:</b>	Service for the Blind State Department of Public Welfare State Capitol, Little Rock
<b>CALIFORNIA:</b>	California State Library for the Blind Sacramento
<b>COLORADO:</b>	Colorado Industries for the Blind 100 W. 7th Avenue, Denver Service for the Blind State Department of Public Welfare State Capitol Annex, Denver
<b>CONNECTICUT:</b>	State Board of Education of the Blind 165 Capitol Avenue, Hartford
<b>DELAWARE:</b>	The Delaware Commission for the Blind 305-307 West 8th Street Wilmington 22
<b>DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA:</b>	The Library of Congress Service for the Blind Washington, D. C. Vocational Rehabilitation Service District of Columbia Services for the Blind Washington, D. C.
<b>FLORIDA:</b>	State Council for the Blind 717 Wallace S. Building, Tampa
<b>GEORGIA:</b>	Adult Service Division Department of Public Welfare New State Office Building Mitchell Street, Atlanta
<b>HAWAII:</b>	Bureau of Sight Conservation and Work with the Blind Department of Social Security, Honolulu

<b>IDAHO:</b>	Idaho State School for the Deaf and Blind Gooding
<b>ILLINOIS:</b>	Division of Visitation of Adult Blind 1900 Marshall Boulevard, Chicago
<b>INDIANA:</b>	Board of Industrial Aid for the Blind 536 West 30th Street Indianapolis
<b>IOWA:</b>	Iowa State Commission for the Blind State House Des Moines
<b>KANSAS:</b>	Division for the Blind State Department of Social Welfare 801 Harrison Street, Topeka
<b>KENTUCKY:</b>	Kentucky Workshop for Adult Blind 2001-7 Frankfort Avenue Louisville
<b>LOUISIANA:</b>	Louisiana State Board for the Blind State Capitol Building Baton Rouge
<b>MAINE:</b>	Service for the Blind Department of Public Welfare Augusta
<b>MARYLAND:</b>	The Maryland Workshop for the Blind 601 North Fulton Avenue Baltimore
<b>MASSACHUSETTS:</b>	Massachusetts Division of the Blind 110 Tremont Street Boston
<b>MICHIGAN:</b>	Service for the Blind Social Welfare Commission 230 North Grand Avenue Lansing 4
<b>MINNESOTA:</b>	Bureau of Aid to the Blind State Office Building St. Paul
<b>MISSISSIPPI:</b>	Division for the Blind State Department of Public Welfare Jackson



- MISSOURI:** Missouri Commission for the Blind  
103 State Capitol Building  
Jefferson City
- MONTANA:** State Department of Public Welfare  
Helena
- NEBRASKA:** Services for the Blind  
Board of Control  
Lincoln
- NEW HAMPSHIRE:** State Department of Public Welfare  
Division of Blind Services  
State House Annex, Capitol Street  
Concord
- NEW JERSEY:** New Jersey State Commission for the Blind  
1060 Broad Street  
Newark
- NEW MEXICO:** Division of Services for the Blind  
Department of Public Welfare  
Santa Fe
- NEW YORK:** Bureau of Services for the Blind  
205 E. 42d Street, New York City
- NORTH CAROLINA:** North Carolina State Commission for the Blind  
401 State Labor Building  
Raleigh
- NORTH DAKOTA:** North Dakota State School for the Blind  
Bathgate
- OHIO:** Ohio Commission for the Blind  
Oak Street at Ninth, Columbus
- OKLAHOMA:** Oklahoma Commission for the Adult Blind  
State Capitol Building  
Oklahoma City
- OREGON:** Oregon Commission for the Blind and Blind Trade  
School  
8435 N. E. Glisan Street  
Portland
- PENNSYLVANIA:** State Council for the Blind  
548 Education Building  
Harrisburg

- PUERTO RICO:** Vocational Institute for Adult Blind  
Avenida Las Palmas  
Santurce
- RHODE ISLAND:** Rhode Island State Bureau for the Blind  
State Capitol, Providence
- SOUTH CAROLINA:** Division for the Blind  
Wade Hampton Office Building  
Columbia
- SOUTH DAKOTA:** State Department of Social Security  
Pierre
- TENNESSEE:** Bureau for the Blind  
State Department of Public Welfare  
Cotton States Building  
Nashville
- TEXAS:** State Commission for the Blind  
State Office Building  
Austin
- UTAH:** Utah Commission for the Adult Blind  
138 South 2d East  
Salt Lake City
- VERMONT:** Field Service for the Adult Blind  
State Capitol, Montpelier
- VIRGINIA:** Virginia Commission for the Blind  
3003 Parkwood Avenue  
Richmond 21
- WASHINGTON:** Division for the Blind  
State Department of Social Security  
Social Security Building  
Olympia
- WEST VIRGINIA:** Division of Blind Services  
State Department of Public Assistance  
Charleston
- WISCONSIN:** State Department of Public Welfare  
Division for Adult Blind  
2385 N. Lake Drive, Milwaukee
- WYOMING:** Wyoming State Division for Deaf and Blind  
Capitol Building  
Cheyenne



# ***Some Occupations and Activities in Which Blind Persons Have Successfully Engaged***

## **AGRICULTURE**

Farmer  
Dairy farmer  
Truck farmer  
Poultry farmer  
Apiarist

## **TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATION**

Laborer, streets and roads  
Manager, trucking business  
Telephone operator

## **TRADE**

Oil land promoter  
Merchandise market  
Commercial traveler  
Coffee taster  
Insurance agent  
Manager, employment agency  
Executive (business)  
Real estate dealer

## **PUBLIC SERVICE**

Tax collector  
Secretary, school board  
Member, public service commission  
Representative in legislature  
Collector of customs  
U. S. Senator  
Justice of the Peace

## **PROFESSIONS:**

Entertainer (musical)  
Author  
Journalist  
Editor  
Clergyman  
College professor  
Lawyer  
Judge  
Composer (music)  
Organist  
Pianist  
Singer  
Music teacher  
Musical director  
Bandmaster  
Commercial player (theater)  
Osteopath  
Teacher, school for the seeing  
Teacher, school for the blind  
Librarians (department for the blind)  
Chiropractor  
Dramatic reader  
Masseur  
Superintendent of institution  
Evangelist  
Executive (agency for blind)  
Home teacher  
Social worker  
Physician's assistant

## **RETAIL DEALERS**

Book dealer  
Shoe merchant  
Standkeeper, news and confectionery  
Clothing-store keeper  
Coal, wood, and ice dealer  
Dry goods dealer  
Grocer  
Furniture dealer  
Fruit dealer  
Hardware dealer  
Dealer in musical instruments  
Produce dealer  
Stationery dealer  
Salesman  
Manager, candy business, manufacture and retail  
Manager, retail piano business  
Office supply business  
Mail order business

## **CLERICAL OCCUPATIONS**

Publicity agent  
Advertising manager  
General clerical worker  
Dictaphone operator  
Typist  
Stenographer

## **DOMESTIC AND PERSONAL SERVICE**

Manager, barber shop  
Manager, poolroom  
Rooming-house keeper  
Housekeeper  
Hotel-keeper  
Janitor

Laundry worker  
Restaurant keeper  
Dishwasher  
Domestic

## **FACTORY OCCUPATIONS**

Assembly work (automobiles, nuts, bolts and locks, vacuum cleaners, telephones, electric specialties)  
Inspecting (auto axles, auto valves, shoes, camera parts)  
Stuffing upholstery  
Buffing (metal)  
Drill-press operating  
Punch-press operating  
Packing (needles, cans, candy cards, novelties)  
Core making (foundry)  
Riveting, safety razors  
Racking, window pulleys  
Stringing jewelry  
Washing machine parts  
Armature winding  
Screw setting (furniture)  
Crating veneers  
Foreman, dye-room  
Inverting bags  
Shaping gloves  
Sorting shoe findings  
Folding boxes  
Stoning dates  
Building fields for sweepers  
Building wood shipping cases  
Repairing bottle crates  
Operating milling machines  
Grinding  
Broaching and reaming